

Standard 4-4 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the beginnings of America as a nation and the establishment of the new government.

4-4.1: Compare the ideas in the Articles of Confederation with those in the United States Constitution, including how powers are now shared between state and national government and how individuals and states are represented in the national congress. (P, H)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand / Conceptual Knowledge

Previous /Future Knowledge:

In 1st and 2nd grades, students were introduced to the functions of the various levels of government (1-3.1) and (2-3.3).

In United States history, students will summarize the early development of representative government and political rights in the American colonies (USHC-2.1). They will learn about the development and effectiveness of the Articles of Confederation (USHC-2.3) and analyze underlying political philosophies, fundamental principles, and purposes of the US Constitution, including the ideas behind the separation of powers and the system of checks and (USHC-2.5).

It is essential for students to know:

The government that was developed under the **Articles of Confederation** was a direct result of the experiences under the royal governors and the King and Parliament. Because the Americans were fighting to preserve the rights of their colonial assemblies, they believed sovereignty rested in their state governments and developed the confederation to unite to fight the war. The Continental Congress provided the model for the Articles of Confederation government. Under the Articles of Confederation, authority for governance rested with the states, not with the people. States were represented in the Confederation Congress that had a one house legislature in which each state had one vote. States formed their own military, made their own rules and printed their own currency. The National Congress could make laws but could not levy taxes directly to support its self. The national government could only request funds from the states. The national government did not have a separate executive, only the president of the Congress. It did not have a separate national court system.

The **United States Constitution** was written to solve problems that arose as a result of the weaknesses in the government under the Articles of Confederation. The **Constitution** is based on the idea that the authority of the government comes directly from the people. The Constitution starts with the statement “We, the People.” Under the Constitution, governing powers are **shared** between the states and the federal government in a system known as federalism. The **national congress** is comprised of the Senate and the House of Representatives. In the Senate, the people of each state have equal representation because each state, no matter its size or population, has two Senators. In the House of Representatives the people of the state are represented by a number of representatives based on the population of the state. For instance, South Carolina has six representatives. The Constitution provided for a separate executive, legislative and judicial branch. There is a president of the United States and a system of national courts.

The Articles of Confederation and the Constitution are similar because they both provided for the establishment of a government. They are different in their understanding of where the authority for government rests and in the powers that are given to the national government.

It is not essential for students to know:

Students do not need to read or memorize any portion of these documents. Students do not need to know the specific problems that gave rise to the writing of the new Constitution. Students do not need to know the number of representatives that are allocated to each state by the Constitution.

Assessment guidelines:

Appropriate assessment would require students to **compare** the Articles of Confederation and the United States Constitution. Students should be able to **explain** how authority for government rested with the states under the Articles of Confederation and with the people under the Constitution. They should be able to **compare** representation in the congresses.

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